



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	GILBERTSVILLE, PA	Accident Number:	NYC97LA121
Date & Time:	06/09/1997, 1930 EDT	Registration:	NONE
Aircraft:	Robbins KOLB FIRESTAR	Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 103: Ultralight		

Analysis

The noncertificated operator/owner of the unregistered ultralight and a passenger departed on a local flight. They had planned to fly over a shopping center, and the passenger stated that they liked to 'fly low and wave at people on the ground. When they arrived at the shopping center, they flew over it 'just above building height.' Witnesses observed two ultralights making low passes over the shopping center. The accident ultralight was observed to turn towards a tethered blimp. The ultralight then banked about 90 degrees away from the blimp, descended, and struck the ground. The ultralight remained intact and the engine continued to operate until impact. There were no maintenance records for the vehicle that was equipped with a single set of flight controls. The FAA Inspector classified the vehicle as a homebuilt airplane due to the dual seats, 10 gallon fuel capacity, and his estimate that the vehicle weight was 300 pounds. The operator had based the ultralight at a licensed airport for about 3 years. FAA records indicated that 24 surveillance's had been conducted at the airport during the previous 24 months, and that no ultralights had been observed or inspected for compliance with Part 103.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The noncertificated operator's improper decision to fly low over a congested area, which resulted in an abrupt maneuver to avoid a collision with a tethered blimp, and the subsequent uncontrolled descent and collision with terrain.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. LIGHT CONDITION - DUSK
2. TERRAIN CONDITION - CONGESTED/CONFINED AREA
3. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - UNQUALIFIED PERSON
4. INADEQUATE SURVEILLANCE OF OPERATION - FAA(ORGANIZATION)

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

5. TERRAIN CONDITION - ROADWAY/HIGHWAY

Pilot Information

Certificate:	None	Age:	39
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Robbins	Registration:	NONE
Model/Series:	KOLB FIRESTAR KOLB FIRES	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	MARK ROBBINS	Engine Manufacturer:	Rotax
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 103: Ultralight		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Dusk
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Witness
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	Light and Variable / , Variable
Temperature:	21° C	Visibility	7 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	NEW HANOVER, PA (N62)	Destination:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	ROBERT L PEARCE	Adopted Date:	04/10/1998
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government

agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report.